

Planning Board – Regular Meeting

Zoom Virtual Platform – www.zoom.us, P: 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 973 7430 6426, Password: 183733
Wednesday April 7th, 2021 7:00 p.m. after Public Hearing

Members Present: Donald Holland, Chair; Walter Gunn, Clerk; Ken Taylor, Bruce Colton, Josh Levine.

Others Present: Alison McDonough, Curt Freedman, Tracy Janik, Dan O'Brien, Mark Gold, Peter LaPointe, Jeffrey Roberts, Frank Colaccino, Matthew Wittmer, John Brodacki, Dave Marinelli, Dino & Anna Facente, Steve Walker, Steven Zicolella.

The *Planning Board Virtual Regular Meeting* was called to order at 8:17 p.m. by Chair Donald Holland.

ANR Application, 763 Longmeadow St. – First Church of Christ Longmeadow and Longmeadow Cemetery Association – Case# 20210407-01:

The proposal consists of conveying a small parcel of land facing Williams Street from the lot owned by First Church of Christ Longmeadow to the Longmeadow Cemetery Association, which has been found to have unmarked remains underground. The Land Court engineers have approved this proposal but because the parcels in question are registered land and handled by the Land Courts, a different filing process compared to other ANR applications is necessary.

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to endorse the ANR application between the First Church of Christ Longmeadow and the Longmeadow Cemetery Association as presented, case #20210407-1, as presented. Roll call vote: - Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Levine: yes, Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Documents presented:

1. *Complete Application, including Plan of Lot Division dated 12-11-2020, revised 03-26-2021 and 04-02-2021.*

Sign Applications – Athleta at Longmeadow Shops, 724 Bliss Rd., various case numbers:

The applications consist of a number of signs. The first application, deemed case #20210407-2, is a primary sign nearly 18 sq. ft. with halo-illuminated white channel letters spelling “Athleta” and logo to be located on the façade’s gable wall, as well as a nearly 2 sq. ft. non-illuminated blade sign. The second application, deemed case #20210407-3, consists of vinyl letterings on the glass transom above the retail space’s entry doors to indicate the address. The third application, deemed case #20210407-4, consists of a vinyl copy sign to be pasted on an existing awning that is to be refurbished with a new material; the applicant was notified that this third application exceeds the sign quantity limits set by the zoning by-laws and, if interested in pursuing this sign, a special permit petition must be filed with the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Walter made a motion, and was seconded by Ken Taylor, to approve the sign application for Athleta at 724 Bliss Rd., case #20210407-2 consisting of a primary halo-illuminated sign and blade sign, as presented. Roll call vote: - Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Levine: yes, Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Walter made a second motion, and was seconded by Ken Taylor, to approve the sign application for Athleta at 724 Bliss Rd., case #20210407-3 consisting of vinyl lettering on storefront glass, as presented on the condition that the total area of the vinyl sign does not exceed the 25% glass coverage limits set forth by Zoning By-law Article XII, Section H-6. Roll call vote: - Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Levine: yes, Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Walter made a third and final motion, and was seconded by Ken Taylor, to take no action on the sign application for Athleta at 724 Bliss Rd., case #20210407-4 consisting of vinyl lettering on an existing-to-be

refurbished awning. Roll call vote: - Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Levine: yes, Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Documents presented:

1. Complete Application, including Shop Drawings labeled Design Number FB-0231-21 dated 02-03-2021 and 02-16-2021.

Sign Applications – “Mathnasium”, 801 Williams St., Case #20210407-5:

The sign in question is nearly 15 sq. ft. illuminated primary sign with black and red letters. Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Ken Taylor, to approve the sign application filed by Hazel Mathletes LLC for “Mathnasium” at 801 Williams St., case #20210407-5, as presented. Roll call vote: - Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Levine: yes, Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Documents presented:

1. Complete Sign application dated 03-15-2021.

Town Manager Update on Proposed Planning and Development Director Request in FY22 Budget:

For the FY22 Town Budget Town Manager Lyn Simmons has proposed the inclusion of a new full-time position that will fulfill the roles of Assistant Town Manager as well as Community Development Director, loosely mirroring a similar practice in the Town of Amherst. The individual in this new position, which was recently approved by the Select Board and is now part of the warrant for the upcoming 2021 Annual Town Meeting, would assist the Town Manager’s Office with a focus on directing the Community Development Department and creating a town-wide vision that will better position the municipality when seeking many of the grant opportunities offered by the state in areas such as planning, sustainability and resiliency. A Department of Community Development Director position has been part of the town charter since 2004 but has never been officially fulfilled, with past Town Managers filling in as acting directors; surrounding municipalities already have such a dedicated position. With some projects being handled individually by specific departments, this less-than-cohesive approach as proven unsuccessful over the years and is affecting Longmeadow’s ability to maintain its “Green Community” designation, hence the proposal for a new position.

The board members expressed enthusiasm and agree with the need for such a role.

Vote #1 - To recommend to Annual Town Meeting (ATM) a proposed amendment to Article IV, Section B to delete subsection 1.1a in its entirety:

While deleting this portion of the by-law would address issues that have generated complaints over a very small number of properties, some board members are concerned over the adverse impact this deletion would have on property owners that benefit from these rentals whose tenants do display proper behavior. The board will consider proposing a more effective amendment on the town meeting floor. Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to recommend the proposed amendment as stated above. Roll call vote: - Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Levine: no, Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. Four in favor and one opposed 4-1, motion passed.

Vote #2 - To recommend to Annual Town Meeting (ATM) a proposed zoning change on property known as 916 Williams Street from “Residential A-1” zone district to “Business” district:

After careful consideration of the timeline set forth by MGL’s Chapter 40a regarding the handling of zoning change requests, the board agreed that a May hearing, per the motion made at the closure of the evening’s public hearing, would be detrimental to the timeline. Therefore, Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Ken Taylor, to continue the hearing on this matter to June 8, with the intent of ensuring that a Planning Board recommendation is valid until nearly the end of the year, thus giving some flexibility of scheduling a Special Fall Town Meeting during the pandemic. Roll call vote: - Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Levine: yes, Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Vote #3 - To recommend to Annual Town Meeting (ATM) a citizen petition to amend the Zoning By-laws to allow the installation of ground-mounted thermal and/or photovoltaic solar panels:

While Mr. Freedman proposed during the public hearing to amend his citizen petition to allow the installation of these panels on side yards only, some board members strongly feel that this scope of work, as currently presented, is better suited under a Zoning Board of Appeals Special Permit procedure that can review petitions on a case-by-case basis. Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Ken Taylor, to recommend the citizens petition for front and side yard installation of ground-mounted solar panels. Roll call vote: - Mr. Gunn: no; Mr. Levine: no, Mr. Taylor: no; Mr. Colton: no; Mr. Holland: no. None in favor 0-5, motion failed.

Meeting Minutes Review:

1. Regular Meeting March 3rd, 2021: Walter Gunn made a motion, which was seconded by Don Holland, to accept the minutes as presented. Roll call vote was; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Levine: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote was; Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Levine: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 9:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano